

WORD FOUNTAIN

The Literary Magazine
of the Osterhout Free Library
Fall•Winter 2017



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Fall • Winter 2017

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The Literary Magazine of the Osterhout Free Library

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**Osterhout
Free Library**

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Contents

Dawn Leas

Delta	1
Timed Door	2
Mother Moon	4

Steve Deutsch

At the Edge	5
The Year We All Got Cancer	7
That Night	8

Lynn Hoggard

Love in the Desert	10
An Endless Loop	11

Abby Caplin

If	12
Song of Songs	14

Steven Concert

Sunset at Times Square	16
------------------------	----

Mitch Goldwater

At the Now Vacant Lot on Bayard	17
The Pedestrian	17

Michelle Reale

Liberation Army	18
-----------------	----

Jim Zola

The Gingerbread Boy Turns 40	20
------------------------------	----

Kate E. Lore	
Lydia	21
Janet Locke	
Partial Tragedy	24
Attention	25
Patricia Farnelli	
Corroboration	26
Achalasia	28
Robert Fillman	
The Cough	29
The Silence	30
The Last Words of My Neighbor	31
Mary Panke	
Do the Dishes	32
Forget the Snail	33
Paula Rittenhouse	
Past	34
Dean Robbins	
You . . . Again	35
Family Reunions	36
Ken Haas	
Perfection	37
The Thorn	38
Michael T. Young	
Evidence of Things Unseen	39

Devon Balwit

Pulling Toward Home

40

Tom Montag

Early Spring

41

Contributors

43

Delta

Dawn Leas

I am a mosaic of Emerald Isle,
Italian leather and gypsy song.

I am swirls of magic,
stories my grandmother told in Slovak,
a foreign language she lived in,
but never taught us.

I am salt. I am water.
Flowing blue to green,
dancing calm to chaos in a white foam dress.

I did not root in mountain mud
like an evergreen, but in sand,
like a pitch pine or orchid
moving with fire and breeze
in the barrens of New Jersey.

I am the woman
stepping off the known trail
into the dunes, a maze of mirage.

I am a delta,
where the Mississippi kisses the Gulf,
a slow approach to open water.

I am running to the horizon
not stopping to think
about what waits
at the intersection of water and sky.

Timed Door

Dawn Leas

Found Words and Phrase on the Minneapolis Skyway

These twin cities don't look exactly the same.

Like you and your sister—
her red hair to your brown.
She speaks with her right hand,
you always go left.
Her scientific logic questions
your emotional language.

She seeks wide fields—
corn stalks swaying.
Her husband saves the hen house
from foxes roaming the night.

You want stacked, vertical living,
one a.m. conversations
in a standing-room-only bar.
Sun rising over steel.

Stop there.

Choose your wings carefully
and tell her to do the same.
No need for separate exits—
you will fly together
to the Mississippi River of your childhood—
far south from here—
where you splashed each other,
ran away,
then toward one another
knowing your parallel paths will somehow cross on this skyway,
a labyrinth connecting the past to the present,
a sanctuary for you both.

You breathe in tandem like these cities
no matter how many miles are between you.
You know, she knows
where one ends and the other begins
even as the sky fills with snow.

Mother Moon

Dawn Leas

After Ho Xuan's Huong's "Questions for the Moon"

Why so much darkness in space?

Are you ever jealous of the sun?

Why do daughters often repeat their mothers' journeys?

Will you whisper gypsy magic to me?

Will you share the secret to your cycles?

Do you understand we crave your freedom?

Does it excite you to orbit the Earth?

What does it feel like to spin on your own axis?

At the Edge

Steve Deutsch

The important questions
have no answers,
my friend told me.

The others had wandered off
while we sat looking out over the lake,
gone gray in the early evening light.
He spoke with little conviction,
as if hoping I might contradict him.

Every now and again
a car passed unseen
on the road behind us,
breaking that stillness
you find only in graveyards
and at the water's edge.

He knew, of course, I wouldn't.
We'd been having
this conversation
since we were teens
and shared a street corner
in South-central Brooklyn
with a gaggle of wannabe thugs.

Quite suddenly
a hundred nesting birds
took to the air.
The sky raged

as they voiced their
indignation.
Then just as suddenly
they settled
and we sat back down,
grinning with spent shock.

Our companions reappeared—
as if strolling out of the setting sun,
and as we clamored
into my weathered car—
speaking of a movie
and perhaps some dinner out,
clouds gathered and darkened.
Tonight, it might well rain.

The Year We All Got Cancer

Steve Deutsch

Winter stayed.
The April rain so cold
it left blisters of ice
on an earth
as scarred and pockmarked
as a landscape mired in war.

We waited through the freeze and thaw
for some sign from the recalcitrant earth—
anxiety growing with each passing day.
The sun was of little use,
peeking indifferently
through the skeletal clouds,
as if late for an appointment
on another planet.

We had become
a shivering muddle—
a people resigned to winter,
when we woke one day
to wild things bursting.
Fields of dandelion
and mustard greens and,
in the most desolate spot of all,
a stand of wild asparagus.

That Night

Steve Deutsch

“I’m sure there are good people out there,”

he said, as he eyed the door.

“I’m just not one of them.”

He talked.

It was his way of calming down.

We were in a bar

up near Times Square.

You know the place

or someplace like it.

They serve boilermakers and boiled dogs,

and no, there was not a soul in the place

you’d want to take home to meet your mother.

The bleeding over his eye

was no better,

and the hand he used

to hold a wad of bloody napkins

up to the gash

was starting to swell.

Every time the door opened, he’d jump

and now he had me doing it too.

When we were young

and faced with something to bear,

we’d summon a magic

to make us invisible.

We’d close our eyes

and count to twenty-five.

It never worked, but it might have,

I closed my eyes.

The violence had been
rapid and real
and I don't want to talk about it.

Love in the Desert

Lynn Hoggard

*In forty-five minutes, he said, go outside
with a camera and take my picture. If no shots
go astray at the nearby shooting range,
I'll be on top of that mountain,
and I'll be waving my arms.*

Then my crazy, jogging husband
was on his way as I sat, camera in hand,
in the Chihuahuan Desert, thinking about
roads high and low that we had traveled
and those who venture or who stay behind.

In forty-five minutes I stood ready,
facing a mountain bathed in sun.
Was he standing there? I saw nothing.
But sight sometimes can crystallize:
I squinted, saw a fine thread at the top

like the filament in a light bulb—
haphazard, hazy, thin,
almost absent to the eye,
at the moment an electrical shock
blazes it into light.

Maybe he's waving his arms, I thought,
or maybe not. I snapped the shot
I hold today: a bare-rock mountain
in the desert, its peak ablaze with emptiness—
no: crowned with incandescence.

An Endless Loop

Lynn Hoggard

In the desert, he lies alone in pain
inside a high cave, no food or water,

his ankle broken. She runs
for help, is trapped, delayed,

and almost immolated. She
lies on a hospital bed, burning

in an agony of helplessness.
Time is surely, surely running out.

Her story, never one of rescue, always
of an endless yearning—she

forever trying to hold back a sun
forever disappearing into earth.

If

Abby Caplin

If, at the moment
of conception,
the matrix
of your corporeality
got plucked from the shelf
near the stove
of Consciousness,
and “you” were ladled
from the hot iron
rim of a dark-holed
kettle, lucky
if paired with soft
rolls and pats
of gold-foiled
buttery love,

while another “you,” by virtue
of spilling from the same
spoon (also into some horses, several
thousand rabbits, a trillion mosquitoes),
worked in a denim factory
in Bangladesh, your
same consciousness
having returned to the brimming
and body to earth
in a flood when you were both
twenty-six,

alive in hundreds of human bodies—
all of you living or having
lived in Caracas, San Francisco,
Cape Town, Seoul
or Gaza, talking Tongan
or Tagalog, your crowds
of relatives, born
of other ladlings, meted out
at their moments,
their own generous servings
of collective selves—

would you still feel
alone?

Song of Songs

Abby Caplin

*Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth—
for your love is more delightful than wine.
Pleasing is the fragrance of...*

—Song of Songs 1:2–3

Today the old woman in the babushka
pushed the halvah on me.
Fat chocolate rolls of it lay
on a tray, covered in wrinkly
plastic wrap. I thought
how darling she was to give me a gift,
but charged me an extra
four dollars, stuck me with all
those calories too.
Then I bit into it, my tongue
sliding into wine,

lost—
naked and held
in brambleberries, gaping
at figs oozing of amber,
bathing on a clay
rooftop reflected in Jerusalem's
wide-eyed moon—

aware only of the drunken
spaceships of crazed
bakery flies zigzagging
in the room's hot center.

Soft it was, the best
beaten sesame,
gilded in honey and salt.

On each marble table,
waxy white orchids eavesdropped
on the sighs of customers,
falling all over themselves,
leaning in for the kiss.

Sunset at Times Square

A Villanelle

Steven Concert

Reflecting in the setting sun,
mannequins in quiet repose
while bodies crash in unison.

So hurriedly the people run
to destinations no one knows.
Reflecting in the setting sun,

where elegance is mixed with fun,
white limousines in lengthy rows
while bodies crash in unison.

Where gridlock fights the engine's gun,
the burning fuel assaults the nose.
Reflecting in the setting sun,

the city rhythms beat as one.
Broadway shines, its radiance grows
while bodies crash in unison.

Without a chance to come undone,
the night time falls and neon glows.
Reflecting in the setting sun
while bodies crash in unison.

At the Now Vacant Lot on Bayard

Mitch Goldwater

I crouch to look at crocus blooms in random array
that trail along the sidewalk
and back across this urban square
of fresh-turned dirt and rusty debris.

A man stops his shuffle and stands above me. He has just returned
from the hospital, he says, a week after a transplant.

His skin is yellowed some.
He calls the purple heads
and golden eyes
on their stick-figure stems
Proud.

* * *

The Pedestrian

Mitch Goldwater

I want a car
like that Porsche, so beautiful
it kills, it holds your gaze,
stiffens you to stone
behind the wheel of your bland sedan,
which, like life, goes on
without your control
toward the phone pole,
the rear bumper just ahead,
the pedestrian
crossing with the light.

Liberation Army

Michelle Reale

Well, you know, it's really been, you know, quite a trip for me.

—Patty Hearst

Everything pointed to survival. I was Patty Hearst with a loaded gun, but really, more like meringue: all flourish with little substance.

The cinnamon I craved was dark as peat, still, I sprinkled it over everything.

My task was subjective. I tied the Gordian knot and focused on digestion.

The suppression of the lump in my throat was a collaborative effort. My peripheral vision has failed me more than once, my words concise in a clutch.

I used to live in a country where a broken heart was a sin, but then I crossed the border. The gentry invested in my doubt, waited for what I might

leave behind, then rifled through my things. Consolation comes in the form of lies. If we could put our algorithms to better use, the government might treat us

like loyal children who only crave a warm glass of milk before bed. I am nearly pavlovic at the initial tonal hints of the *Ave Maria*. I weep into my princess

sleeves, but I remain strong enough to catch a dying star in my bare hands, a sure cure for persistent melancholy.

The man who beat his dog, lost his wife, but found her again.
It is a love story I am fond of telling, though the optics are troubling.

My friends miss me so much. I once said *soldier* when I meant to say
shoulder, conflating
the weight of our extraordinary burdens and obligations, spread
evenly among us.

Through the velvet fog we endure, but still we are impressed by the
shelf life of everyday
agonies. Utopian thinking has a purpose because the seasons are,
after all, persistent.

Call me Tania.

The Gingerbread Boy Turns 40

Jim Zola

Last night's love carries me
back across the river.
I hurry the kids for school,
replace missing gumdrops,
straighten crooked faces.
Fox grumbles that our life
has grown stale.
Sometimes I hear
the farmer's wife. Tempting.
Sweetness is no longer an issue.
In dreams I run as fast as I can.

Lydia

Kate E. Lore

Lydia stands, dangerously close, next to the rapidly moving parts of the machine. It is so loud in her ear she can feel it in her skull. Her hair is gently shaking from the vibrations. Her eardrums hurt. They throb to the sound. Her eyes jiggle in their sockets. So she closes them.

The machine is at the center of the factory. It's hidden behind the lines of smaller machines, and large storage bins, and a conveyer belt that cuts the room in half. Pallets are driven past. They are held up in the air, ten feet up off the ground, by a guy driving a forklift. On the ground, yellow lines are drawn in geometric shapes, splitting the entire warehouse into smaller pieces that fit perfectly together like a puzzle. These lines are here to keep the workers from leaving their area, from leaving their place, from stepping in the line of potential danger.

Lydia imagines stepping out of her square. Of raising her foot over the grey cement and passing that yellow line. She imagines walking out exactly seven feet to the perfect middle distance between herself and the work zone across the way from her. She imagines looking down the straight line, down to the large swing doors that separate the two warehouses.

Lydia imagines that she didn't hear the forklift coming up behind her. That he hits her and breaks her leg. That everyone

comes running over and they try to help her, to comfort her, to ease her pain. She imagines them in deep concern for her injuries. She imagines they care. She imagines they love her.

Lydia imagines that it kills her. That she tragically dies despite their best efforts. That the pallets fall all in one go because the driver wasn't paying attention, that he bumped the switch by accident when he was startled. And it crushes her quickly all in one go. It happens so fast people are stunned, women are traumatized. The driver will have to see a psychologist. The blood will seep out from the pile of wood and it will stain the shoes of the nearest stander by with a red so deep no amount of washing could get it out.

And they would remember her. And they would regret that they didn't take the time to better know her. That they didn't even try. And they would learn about her after this. They would investigate her life, find out who she was, and they would wish she were still alive. They would remember her. They would mourn her. They would talk about and remember her for the rest of their lives.

Lydia also imagines getting caught in the machine. She imagines this often. This is why she likes to stand here. Lydia imagines the gory scene of her head being ripped off, or crushed between the gears because one of her long strands of hair gets caught. She imagines her body breaks the machines and the

whole factory eventually goes out of business because of her death. And maybe her family would cash in on a lawsuit. Maybe her nieces and nephews could afford to go to college. Maybe they would always remember their aunt, maybe they'd pay tribute in some way, maybe they'd always remember her well. Maybe the family would always say nice things about her, maybe they would toast cheers to her at every holiday feast.

Lydia's eyes pop open and she feels a sudden forceful tug at the back of her head. The force of it jerks her backwards, pulling her by the hair. And it snaps a dozen hairs right out of her skull with a pain that comes a moment after. After the shock.

Lydia doesn't breathe for a moment. She can feel the rush of wind from the massive moving machine next to her. She is deaf to the sound now. Her whole body is focused on the movement. She can feel it shaking in the ground beneath her feet.

Lydia exhales. Her eyes are watering. She excuses herself to go to the bathroom.

Partial Tragedy

Janet Locke

What if your
lost, ruined,
destroyed or dead
beloved person or thing
were still with you, and had instead
just been irreparably damaged?

The house surviving a fire will always smell charred.
Perhaps there are some conditions
worse than death.
How long can you keep up
your level of angst?
How much energy can you spend
before you go numb?

Attention

Janet Locke

The microwave clock
tells me I'm running late,
even though it runs slow.

So also say my cell phone,
my watch, and my wall clock.

A good friend was late for
everything, and she was perfect
in every other way.
Her tardiness was even a perfection
so not to intimidate others
with flawlessness.

When I cook my oatmeal before
work, the microwave dings after two
minutes, switching from the
countdown time display, to scrolling
the words "Food Is Ready."
That's what time it is:
Food Is Ready Time.

I sit down with my bowl and
think about my day to come,
the week to come, my friend,
and become more perfectly tardy.

Corroboration

Patricia Farnelli

My great-grandmother Augusta
saw leprechauns daily.
She shared her high four-poster bed with me,
age three.
I slept on the side against the wall.
When wee green men
danced on her chest of drawers
she would yell for my mother
to bring a broom
and sweep them away.

My great-grandmother was thin
and wore cat-eye glasses
and she'd say, "Let's go for a walk
around the block"
and take me by the hand
and we'd walk a few laps
around the dining room table.

Her second childhood and my
early childhood coincided,
so our minds
were in agreement.
We liked tea parties
and doll babies,
nursery rhymes and songs in the dark.

She was weakened
by ovarian cancer
but we'd rush to investigate
when my mother told us there was a draft
in the living room.
We expected a giraffe.

When the ambulance took her
I spent the first night in that high bed alone
I rolled to spoon with Nanny
and fell hard to the floor
breaking a rib and collarbone
and ending up at the same hospital
but in the pediatric ward.

They said she was up
with the angels in heaven
but I determined fairies
came to her rescue instead.

Achalasia

Patricia Farnelli

a squeezing pain in my chest
like a heart ache
a lovely name for
a gagging spasm
a clutch like angina
a plumber's snake down my throat
a twist of an alien anaconda
a word sounding like accolade and euthanasia
the difference between an anthem and anathema
Aphasia
An ache in Asia

The Cough

Robert Fillman

I am sleeping in the bedroom
down the hall for another night—

having spent the last two away
from my wife, in a narrow bed,

feet dangling over the edge,
unsure how to fold my long arms

as I bump against the rear wall
of the coldest room in the house.

All night, I hear my son coughing
for long intervals, a noise like

a shovel scraped and scraped and scraped
against the frozen ground until

his breath returns, like welcomed snow
hissing over rooftops before

another sudden coughing spell.
I hear my wife's voice soothing him

to sleep like violin music,
and I trail that sweet sound, fingers

in air conducting in the dark,
as if my hands play some small part

in coaxing his tired, little lungs
slow and easy until the dawn.

The Silence

Robert Fillman

Some nights, from our bedroom window,
we'd see his ramshackle pickup
wobbling along the embankment
of the alley, a rut he dug
for himself. He'd let the truck fume
while he sucked a Camel cigarette
down to a nub, then fling it still-glowing
into the brush. A little drunk, though
we didn't know it then, he'd stumble out,
go around to the other side, lift
his daughter down, as if she were
a tool carefully hung in its place,
a stringy-haired beanpole, pretty though
amidst the wreckage and gray exhaust.
She got free lunches because Uncle Ted fell
from a roof and hadn't worked in years.
We'd peek to see his tattooed arms,
big hands petting the neighbor's lab
at the fence. We'd giggle as he fumbled
to unlatch the gate, lumber to the porch,
Cousin Becky lost happily in the backyard
playing with our toys. We thought
of yelling down as he pounded on the door,
crazed, shouting at our mother: *I know
you're in there, goddamn it,
I'm your brother, for Christ's sake!*
But it might as well have been nailed shut.
We didn't answer, instead looked
up and down the alley, to the other
row houses, waited for neighbors to peek
through curtains, stick heads out doors.
We learned never to say a single word.

The Last Words of My Neighbor

Robert Fillman

After he buried his son,
words had no motion. Motion

became his words. His mind strained
yet he said nothing at all,

not to me, not anyone,
not even when he ordered

the second cup of coffee
or when the waitress spilled some

on the scuffed toe of his boot.
Life became a forefinger

pointed, a jaw that couldn't
be pried, the tug on a sleeve,

a favor left ungranted,
the slap of a wooden gate,

a watchful calculation
of regret against restraint.

Do the Dishes

Mary Panke

If you don't want
to do the dishes
don't. If you are
going to do them
stop bellyaching
and do them
when you are ready.
Stop being sad
about dishes
if you can.
Try and remember
you love dishes,
you are lucky
to have them,
food to make them
dirty, running water,
a sink, legs to stand on.
And a mind, too. With it
you can wander
anywhere, go nowhere
while you wash. Turn on
the tap, squeeze the soap,
the sponge, scrub
and rinse. Cry
into the sink if it helps.
Laugh if you think
it's funny.
Close your eyes.
Open your eyes.
Ask someone
to help dry
if you have to.

Forget the Snail

Mary Panke

Maybe depression is the color of biology,
painted on genes like green-brown eyes
or chalk-blue streaks, blurred by staying under
water too long. Or olive-grey lichens clinging
to oaks, their leaves mothers' hands calling
you back to shore, while you drift and drift, numb
in the salty sling of the tide,

always in danger of going out too far. Or maybe
depression is a mermaid. Pockets of shiny stones,
she smiles, offers a red plastic shovel, tells you
it is for digging, for moving mountains of sand,
pulls a snail from the surf, tells you
to eat its flesh, keep the shell forever.
Or forget the snail,

jump into the sea and swim as far as your body
will take you. Use your arms to push the tides.
Use your legs to kick the weeds. Dive down,
deeper than your chemistry, to coral gardens,
all honey and bronze, all ruby and lime. Bring
something back, something beautiful,
something you can love.

Past

Paula Rittenhouse

You act like you're so special,
So unlovable,
Because you have secrets,
Because you have a "past,"
As if I'm also supposed to find it shocking
That you have a favorite food
Or that you have feelings
Or that maybe,
Just maybe,
You let your lungs inflate and deflate
Over and over again.

You . . . Again

Dean Robbins

“I know. It’s just habit,”
he says standing too close
to an old memory;
trying to warm himself
against a coal burner
some weeks ago removed
from ever offering
to stay the cold again.
I smile, thinking of you,
and wish I did not know
exactly what he means.

Family Reunion

Dean Robbins

The snakeskin, most complete and long enough
to represent its previous owner
as something to avoid, cannot prevent
the conversation from dwelling upon
the causes behind such poor attendance:
birthday parties and work, a baptism,
the disbelief that after all these years
reserving the third Sunday in August
there are those who fail to remember.
Each one a reason for someone's absence;
acceptable or not—up for debate.
It's as much who is not here as who is.

Perfection

Ken Haas

In junior high Spanish class
Mr. Koochman gave each kid a nickname
that followed us into the streets.

The pouty ingénue was Labios Levine,
the over-developed blonde Melones Morgan,
the kid from the projects, Kong Coleman.
The hairy one became Oso,
the sweaty one Puerco,
and the frail, nervous one
who rode the D train early
with the night nurses and winos,
was dubbed Hércules.

This was the Bronx in 1965.

Koochman, a cadaver in tweed,
gave a daily quiz, and as of March
Hércules hadn't missed a question.
So the tests got harder.
And the subway became a study hall
for the boy's now-epic obsession.
Until, with two weeks left in the school year,
Koochman, understanding he was beaten,
called Hércules to stand before him
and, quivering, yelled, "You are a machine,"
in his pustuled face. The kid just turned
toward the empty blackboard,
slid a piece of chalk from its metal ledge,
and wrote down his name.

At our 40th reunion a woman resembling Melones
ran up to me, shouting, “Hércules, Hércules...”
She had apparently placed second in the class
then spent her career as a Spanish translator,
so was devastated to learn that I

had not become the U.S. Ambassador to Spain.
I was about to tell her she had the wrong guy—
that was another boy.
Then I remembered who we all were once.

* * *

The Thorn

Ken Haas

It's what she uses
to keep me away, and how
I know she's still here.

Evidence of Things Unseen

Michael T. Young

At first a scratch behind the wall.
Swelling pipes? Then
streamers of insulation
behind the toilet, frayed
carpet threads near baseboard molding.

Refresh the traps, clean out
the old peanut butter bait,
green and hard in the bowls.

Rats take days to grow comfortable
with changes in the room.
But on a rainy night,
when there's little to feed on, a snap
in the dark. In the morning, I find
the limp, mud-colored
body of our suspicions.

There's relief, an easing of defenses,
but always less than we hope for.
More evidence leaks into the day,
seeps into the streets until I hear
a scratch behind everything:
the pavement, the stalled air settling
around the grape hyacinth, the dogwood
shading the corner, even the stop signs
that prevent nothing.

Pulling Towards Home

Devon Balwit

The east wind sends my poncho swooping
overhead,

startling the dog, already jittery from the rain-streaked
headlights

and the runners, who appear and recede as from another
dimension.

A phalanx of geese wheels above, considering
then rejecting

this small reservoir in its iron palisade,
perhaps sensing

its poured foundation, neither pond scum nor larvae,
slim pickings

for migrants. Winter this year won't let go, storm
following storm,

sleet punishing crocus. Perhaps, like a protective
parent, the earth

refuses to release us to troubled times, to the bullies
occupying

the commons. Our mother is doing her best to keep us
hibernating

until the threat passes over. Hungrily, the dog
pulls towards home.

Early Spring

Tom Montag

The wind has
let down the sky.

Small birds fly
into afternoon.

We are leaving
winter behind.

The birds know it.
We know it.

All the green things
have been told, though

not all of them
believe it yet.

Contributors

Devon Balwit teaches in Portland, OR. She is a poetry editor for *Minute Magazine* and has six chapbooks and two full-length collections out or forthcoming: *We are Procession*, *Seismograph* (Nixes Mate Books) and *Motes at Play in the Halls of Light* (Kelsay Books). Her individual poems can be found in *Cordite*, *The Cincinnati Review*, *The Carolina Quarterly*, *Fifth Wednesday*, *The Ekphrastic Review*, *Red Earth Review*, *The Fourth River*, *The Free State Review*, *Rattle*, *Posit*, and more.

Abby Caplin's poems have appeared in *Alyss*, *The Binnacle*, *Burningword*, *Common Ground Review*, *Crack the Spine*, *The Healing Muse*, *McNeese*, *Poetica*, *The Round*, *TSR: The Southampton Review*, *Tikkun*, and *Willow Review*, among others. Her poem "Still Arguing with Old Synagogue" was a finalist for the 2015 Anna Davidson Rosenberg Poetry Award, and she is an award recipient of the San Francisco Poets Eleven 2016. She is a physician and practices mind-body medicine in San Francisco. Her website is www.abbycaplin.com.

Steven Concert is a New York native who has been transplanted in northeast Pennsylvania. One of nine children, he finds peace in the middle of chaos. He has logged nearly 100,000 miles on road trips in the name of poetry. He is both a board member of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies, and vice president of the Pennsylvania Poetry Society. Steven often judges poetry for state and national competitions. His poetry has won awards on local, state, and national levels. His publication credits include *Got Verse?*, *Blue*, *Listening to Water: The Susquehanna Watershed Anthology*, and *Mad Poets Review*.

Steve Deutsch, a semi-retired practitioner of the fluid mechanics of mechanical hearts and heart valves, lives with his wife Karen, a visual artist, in State College, PA. Steve writes poetry, short fiction and his blog: stevieslaw.wordpress.com. His most recent publications have been in *Eclectica Magazine*, *The Ekphrastic Review*, *New Verse News*, *One Sentence Poems*, and *Misfit Magazine*.

Patricia Farnelli has 30 years of experience as a newspaper staff writer/reporter and now writes poetry to construct "imaginary gardens with real toads in them." She put herself through college and grad school by working various jobs. In the meantime, she's become a mother of eight and a grandmother of seven, taught in public and private schools and community colleges, milked a herd of 40 cows, grown vegetables for opera singers, and been a migrant farmer. Her kids are all above average.

Robert Fillman won the poetry contest at the 2016 Pennsylvania Writers Conference and has been featured as a “Showcase Poet” in *the Aurorean*. Recently, his poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *BlueLine*, *Cider Press Review*, *The Comstock Review*, *Kestrel*, *Pembroke Magazine*, *The Sow’s Ear Poetry Review*, *Salamander*, *Spillway*, and others. He is currently a Ph.D. candidate and Senior Teaching Fellow at Lehigh University, where he also edits the campus literary magazine, *Amaranth*, and runs the Drown Writers Series. He lives in eastern Pennsylvania with his wife, Melissa, and their two children, Emma and Robbie.

Mitch Goldwater teaches poetry writing at Mansfield University. Nowadays he mostly crouches between song and poetry, trying to fit the one into the other, right where he thinks they belong. He has an MFA from the University of Pittsburgh and lives in Corning, NY.

Ken Haas was born in New York City; went to college, law school, and business school at Harvard University; and received an MA in English literature at the University of Sussex, U.K., where he wrote his thesis on Wallace Stevens. He now lives in San Francisco, where he works in healthcare and sponsors a weekly poetry writing program at UCSF Children’s Hospital, which employs two poet-teachers from California Poets in the Schools. His poetry has been anthologized in *The Place that Inhabits Us* (Sixteen Rivers Press, 2010) and the *Marin Poetry Center Anthology* (2012, 2013).

Lynn Hoggard received a Ph.D. in comparative literature from the University of Southern California and taught at Midwestern State University as Professor of English and French and Coordinator of Humanities. In 2003, the Texas Institute of Letters awarded her the Soeurette Diehl Fraser award for best translation. She has published six books: three French translations, a biography, a memoir, and a poetry collection (*Bushwhacking Home*, TCU Press, 2017). Lynn has published poems in more than forty peer-reviewed journals.

Dawn Leas is the author of the poetry collection *Take Something When You Go* (Winter Goose Publishing) and the chapbook *I Know When to Keep Quiet* (Finishing Line Press). Her work has appeared in journals such as *Cumberland River Review*, *The Pedestal Magazine*, *Goldwakepress.org*, *Willows Wept Review*, *Clear Poetry*, *Poetry in Transit*, *Southern Women’s Review*, *Literary Mama*, *San Pedro River Review*, *Connecticut River Review* and others. She has recently left the 9-to-5 world and has jumped back into the self-employed writing world.

Janet Locke was born and raised in South Dakota and has spent the last 27 years in Pennsylvania. She attended the first meeting of the River Poets in Bloomsburg, May 1994, before they even had a name. She is now their secretary and treasurer. (Garrison Keillor would insist she admit here that she is an English major.) She has read her poetry in local venues such as Priestley Chapel in Northumberland (First Sunday Program of Words and Music), area festivals, the rotunda of the State Capitol (when the River Poets were invited), and many dozens of River Poets meetings.

Kate E. Lore is the pen name of Kate Isaacs, a resident of Columbus, Ohio, born in Dayton, Ohio. She has published creative nonfiction, flash fiction, and short stories with various literary magazines. Kate has worked for several Ohio publications as a freelance journalist. She also does comics and illustrations both as self-publication and as various anthology features. For more information see www.kateelore.com.

Tom Montag is the author of *In This Place: Selected Poems 1982–2013*, *This Wrecked World*, and *The Miles No One Wants*. He has been a featured poet at *Atticus Review*, *Contemporary American Voices*, *Houseboat*, and *Basil O’Flaherty Review*. Tom received Pushcart Prize nominations from *Provo Canyon Review*, *Blue Heron Review*, and *The Lake*. With David Graham, he is editing an anthology of poetry about small-town America.

Mary Panke is an emerging writer who spends her days in Connecticut taking care of people, real and fictitious. Her stories and poems invite readers to look at the world through a questioning lens and find beauty without necessarily finding answers. You can find some of her latest work in *The Ekphrastic Review*.

Michelle Reale is an Associate Professor at Arcadia University and the author of seven collections of poetry, including the most recent *The Marie Curie Sequence* (Dancing Girl Press), the forthcoming *All These Things Were Real* (West Philly Press), and *Confini: Poems of Refugees in Sicily* (Cervena Barva Press, 2018).

Paula Rittenhouse is a book-loving English student and aspiring cat lady from Plymouth, Pennsylvania. She is always driven to create, whether it’s poetry, jewelry, embroidery, or almost any other form of art. She wants to work in library science when she’s done with college and hopes to publish a book of poetry and essays someday. She runs a small blog that no one’s heard of, where she posts short pieces of writing on Saturdays. You can find these pieces at www.wirelesswizard.wordpress.com/category/writing.

Dean Robbins lives in Danville, Pennsylvania with his wife, Karen. He has been composing poetry for 35 years and has been published in various journals and magazines. These include but are not limited to *The Lyric*, *The Society of Classical Poets*, *The Broadkill Review*, and *Ideals*. He has also written the words to *Listen*, a libretto (music composed by Steven Miller) for the sisters of SAI, Mansfield University Chapter. Robbins has earned a B.A. in English and an M.A. in interpersonal communication with graduate English courses. He enjoys baseball, reading, writing, and his children and grandchildren.

Michael T. Young's fourth collection, *The Beautiful Moment of Being Lost*, was published by Poets Wear Prada. His chapbook, *Living in the Counterpoint*, received the 2014 Jean Pedrick Award. He received a fellowship from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and the Chaffin Poetry Award. His work has appeared in numerous journals, including *Cimarron Review*, *Comstock Review*, *The Cortland Review*, and *The Potomac Review*. His work is also in the anthologies *Phoenix Rising*, *Chance of a Ghost*, and *Rabbit Ears: TV Poems*.

Jim Zola has worked in a warehouse, as a security guard, in a bookstore, as a teacher for Deaf children, as a toy designer for Fisher-Price, and currently as a children's librarian. Published in many journals through the years, his publications include a chapbook, *The One Hundred Bones of Weather* (Blue Pitcher Press), and a full-length poetry collection, *What Glorious Possibilities* (Aldrich Press). He currently lives in Greensboro, NC.



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